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DERNEATH THE BOUGH

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

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UNDERNEATH THE BOUGH

UNDERNEATH THE BOUGH

A BOOK OF VERSES

By

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

THE GRAFTON PRESS

NEW YORK

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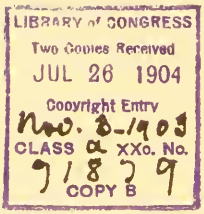

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GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

This little book is offered to
AGNES
its inspirer, in this the tenth year
of her reign.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Titus Munson Coan, Mr. Justo Quintéro and Mr. A. B. Myrick for assistance rendered, and to acknowledge the kind permission to reprint certain of these verses given me by The Literary Digest, Harvard Illustrated Magazine, Vogue, Middletown Forum, Red Letter, Literary Review, Boston Transcript, Town Topics, Smart Set, The New York Herald and other periodicals.

G. A. E.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. The Race of the Mighty	1
II. Songs & Sonnets.	
Love Beatified	9
Morning, Noon and Night	10
Dante	11
Love's Blindness	12
Hesperides	13
My Garden	18
Erinnerungen	19
The Battle Royal	20
España	21
Love's Fear	22
Longings	23
Horace, IV, 8	24
Ricordatevi Di Me!	26
The Tower	28
Love's Prayer	30

PAGE.

Combien J'ai Douce Souvenance . 31
My Little Red Devil and I . . 33
The College Pump 37
I Disputanti 38
Quand Vous Serez Bien Vieille . 39
One Summer Night . . 40
A Une Fleurette . . . 42
Blest Be the Day . . . 43
Mignonne Allons Voir Si La Rose . 44
Religion 45
The Great Woods Were Awakening 46
I-N-R-I 47
Fayre Robyn . . . 48
Coeur de Femme . . . 51

III. BALLADES & RONDEAUX

Ballade of the Sick . . 54
Three Rondeaux from Charles d'Orléans . . . 56
The Song of the Poor . . 59
Kyrielle 62

PAGE.

Rondeau 64
When I First Saw Edmée . . 65
My Old Coat . . . 66
A Pantoum . . . 68
When Doris Deigns . . 70

IV. THE YEAR

Spring—May Evening . . 72
Summer—August Rain . . 73
Autumn—November in Cambridge . 74
Winter—Hampton Holidays . 75

V. MORS OMNIUM VICTOR

Gunga Din in Hell . . 78
Cui Bono? . . . 79
The Bride-Bed . . . 80
Dead Loves . . . 81
Death the Friend . . . 82
La Jeune Fille . . . 83
Lucie 84
Luctus in Morte Passeris . . 89

PAGE.

Death in December . . 90
The Royal Council . . 92
Carmen Mortis . . . 93

THE RACE OF THE MIGHTY

The Race of the Mighty*

THE START

THE appointed time at length the dials show.
"Attention, both!... Now, are you
ready?... Go!!"
The chauffeur grips his lever with a hand
Of steel.—A leap!—A flash of wheels! A grand
And supple beast-like spring!—A growl of gear!
As, sweeping through the multitudinous sea
Of men upraising full-voiced cheer on cheer,
He whirls away to promised victory!...

ON THE ROAD

The high road stretches straight and white
Away
To dreamy distance, on and on—
The day
Dawns sharp and foggy; nips the driver's
Nose,
Despite his costly furs. Zounds! How
It blows!
The motor purrs!—Our mobile seems
To fly,

* From Gaëtan de Méaulne's "Course des Grands Masqués." Here reprinted by courtesy of the New York "Herald." To this translation was awarded the Herald's First Prize of 500 francs.

Nor touch the ground . . . (Pneumatic
Mystery!)
The motor purrs!—Farewell wood, field
And stream!
Once on the road, we've scanty time
To dream!
The motor purrs!—Look out! A sheer
Decline.
Temptation whispers: Faster here!
It's fine!
Faster? It's madness! Yes, I know!—
But on!
Full speed down hill! Another record
Gone! . . .
The driver plunges out of view . . .
See, there
He climbs the distant slope again.
I swear
He'd scale Olympus! Yet that course
Is clear
From many mishaps that beset
Us here!
We crush a curséd mongrel in
The dust!

Slow down to miss an English spinster,
Just
Graze by her on her clumsy, ancient
Wheel!—
Rout ducks and chickens, set the pigs
A-squeal!
It's not *our* fault! We can't be kept
All day
To clear the road!... Speed on!—Away!
Away!...

THE STRUGGLE

But hark!... Behind, a trumpet-blast winds clear!
Great God! Our dread competitor draws near;
We'd half a minute start, and now, like Fate,
He's rushing onward to annihilate
Distance and time, whirled in a hurricane!
Inexorably we see him gain and gain....

"Now!—speed her up!" the boy cries out.
"More speed!"
"The curséd motor's gone to sleep!—Indeed,
"We're hardly doing fifty miles an hour.
"But he won't pass us yet awhile! More
power!"...

The driver heeds; he moves—the furious pace
Grows frenzied! Oh, the glory of a race
Like this of modern days, with steady hand
To steer a whirlwind through a startled land!

THE WATCHERS

"The first is near!—Let no one cross!—
"Take care!
"See! There they are!—Look out! The
horn! Beware!
"Stand back!—They're two!... It's Girardot!
No, no;
"It's Charron No, it's Levegh!—How they
blow
"That horn!"... But who can hope to recognize
Or name the shrilling bullet in its flight?
And what are names when glory blinds the eyes?
The towns love sport, and cheer; but, half in
fright
The laboring peasants stop their ploughs to see
This avalanche—this hurtling mystery!

THE FINISH

Untiring, on their mounts of fire and steel,
The shielded chauffeurs, watchful, hand on wheel,
Have flashed through many a league;—have breathed the dust
Of devious ways; have skirted wood and sea;
Have traversed towns, crossed rivers, hills and dales;—
Nor halted once! To learn geography
By such vast lessons, though it tire the flesh,
Exalts the soul and makes the spirit free.
But now must end this vast, Titanic race!
(It cannot last forever!)—See! The place
Lies there!... A broad, white banner bars the way,
Between two lofty poles with streamers gay.
The "FINISH" there we read. The end at last!
All rest and glory, once that goal is passed!
A final burst!—The driver grips the bar!
The "FINISH!" In the road he sees afar
A judge with solemn air attentive stand,
Waving a crimson kerchief in his hand...
"Stop!" Harshly grinds the brake—"What number's this?"
"Your name?"
Recorded!
Apotheosis!!

SONGS & SONNETS

Love Beatified.

LOVE, slain by us and buried yesterday,
Rose up again, nor in his grave would stay.

On his earth-stainèd brow and sightless eyes
Still shone the splendours of our Paradise.

Hushed was each dissonance, every fault made clean,
And joys alone I saw, that might have been.

It never seemed our Love could shew so fair
As that dead Presence, shrined in glory there.

I would not have our Love to live again,
And blend each pleasure with his greater pain.—

Oh better far this blessèd death, and rest!
Dead Love I clasp, I cherish to my breast
And ever shall, for this I know is best!

Morning, Noon and Night.

I LOVE thee when the gates of eastern light
Are opened by the Morning-star, aflame;
I love thee when the rose-red heavens proclaim
The coming of their lord, to mortal sight,
And cloudless, when from his imperial height
He looks in glory down. I breathe thy name
With thoughts of love, when drowsy Noon the same
Poised, equal distance holds, twixt dawn and night.

I love thee when the West begins to glow,
And when the restless winds lie still in heaven;
I love thee when the deep'ning shadows fall,
As comes with Tyrian dye, soft, purple even;
But when, from out the waters, rises slow
The noiseless Night, I love thee best of all.

Dante.

THOU'RT but a pensive, dreaming Boy, when first
To thy sad eyne the sight of Love appears
With blessèd Beatrice. Nine circling years
Name thee the wounded Lover, whose sweet thirst
Is never sated, nor whose fever less.
At Campaldino thou'rt the mailèd Knight;
Savage to spur thy City on toward right
Thou'rt driven, its scape-goat, to the wilderness.

There, in the stranger's house whose stairs are pain
To mount, whose bread is bitter to thy mouth,
Dawns thy Great Vision, mid thy soul's last drouth;
And, past Hell's flame and Purgatory's round,
Greets thee thy love most gentle, once again,
Thou frowning Florentine with laurels crowned!

Love's Blindness.

"O LOVE, my Love, thou canst not know how sweet,
How dear thou art!"—"Naught would I know, save this
That thou wilt ever yearn to share my kiss!
So being, I reck not whether years be fleet
Or endless!"—"But thou canst not see thy face
As others see thee! Thy deep eyes that greet
Their lucent-mirrored glimmerings, melt and meet
In glory there, to blind themselves a space!"

"Hush, O my heart! Thy vain hyperbole
Means naught; but take in both thy hands and turn
To thee this face of mine, and kiss my brow,
And after that mine eyes which cannot see
But only feel thy lips that thrill, and now
My mouth, and now—O God! thy kisses burn!"

Hesperides.

I

NOW once again the angry sun
Wheels up the heaven his tireless way;
Once more we strangling herds of men
Wake to our labours never-done,
Rise up to toil another day.
Down flares the heat on town and street,
Wide-warping pillar, span and plinth;
Once more my burning, wearied eyes
Within this monstrous labyrinth
Meet the mad heat that stifles me,
And O, my baffled spirit flies
In dreams to thy green wood and thee,
To thee!... To thee!...

II

My pavement-wearied feet again
Tread the rough streets whose ways are pain,
Hot with the sun's last sullen beam,
And yet—I dream!
Dream when I wake, and at high, blinding Noon,
Or when the moon
Mócks the sad City in her sullen night
That burns too bright!
So sweet my visions seem
That from this sordid smoke and dust I turn,
Turn where the dim Wood-world calls out to me
And where the forest-virgins I half see
With green mysterious fingers beckoning!

Where vine-wreathed woodland altars sunlit
burn,
Or Dryads weave their mystic rounds and sing,
Sing high, sing low, with magic cadences
That once the wild oaks of Dodona heard;
And every wood-note bids me burst asunder
The bonds that hold me from the leaf-hid bird!
I quaff thee, O Nepenthe! Ah, the wonder
Grows that there be who scorn not wealth and
ease,
Who still will choose the street-life, rough and
blurred,
Who will not quest you, O Hesperides! . . .

III

And now, and now. . . I feel the forest-moss!
O, on these moss-beds let me lie with Pan,
Twined with the ivy-vine in tendrilled curls!
And I will hold all gold that hampers man
But the base ashes of a barren dross!
On with the love-dance of the pagan girls!
The pagan girls with lips all rosy-red,
With breasts up-girt and foreheads garlanded!
With fair white foreheads nobly garlanded!
With sandalled feet that weave the magic ring
Now . . . let them sing,
And I will pipe a song that all may hear,
To bid them mind the time of my wild rhyme!
Away! Away! Beware our mystic trees!
Who will not quest you, O Hesperides? . . .

IV

Great men of song, what sing ye? Woodland
meadows?
Rocks, trees and rills where sunlight glints to
gold?
Sing ye the hills adown whose sides blue shadows
Creep when the westering day is growing old?
Sing ye the brooks where in the purling shallows
The small fish dart and gleam?
Sing ye the pale green tresses of the willows
That stoop to kiss the stream?

Or sing ye burning streets and sweating toil
Where we spawned swarms of men, unendingly,
Above, below, in mart and workshop's moil
Have quite forgot thee, O mine Arcady? . . .

My Garden.

With a copy of "Sonnets of this Century."

THIS little book, a Garden where the bloom
And fragrance of an hundred years are pent,
To thee, dear girl, at Christmas-tide is sent
By one who breathes with love the sweet perfume
Of such frail flowers. Let aye the world consume
Itself with toil and labour—such are all
Without the bounds of this my garden-wall,
And I, in light, feel not nor heed their gloom.

Come thou into my Garden! Let me show
Thee all the treasures that do lend it grace,
These goodly Sonnets, standing in a row
To tell of joy, tears, love,—life's madrigal;
And, mistress of the pure enchanted place,
Be thou the fairest Flower among them all! . . .

Erinnerungen.

SCHWER ist mein Herz, und heute kann ich nicht
Mehr lesen—kann nicht denken, leiden mehr.
Aus jeder Ecke kommt ein Schatten her,
Wie aus dem toten Himmel geht das Licht.
Ich sinn' und sinn'—iche sehe ihn noch, wie er
Vor langen Jahren zartlich schaut' mich an
Eh' unsere reine Liebe erst begann
Langsam zu sterben, ich zu trauern sehr. . .

Schwer ist mein Herz. Aus seinen Ecken auch
Kriechen die Schatten, schnell und schneller. Jetzt
Vernimmt mein müdes Ohr den ersten Hauch
Der Winternacht . . . Es glimmert Strom und Wald
In dunkler Ferne . . . Dies vergeht zuletzt,
Und alles endlich finster ist und kalt. . .

The Battle Royal.

THOU Battle Royal! Kings and gentlemen
At arms, and lords have fought thee since the mists
Of time, back-rolling, show'd thy mimic lists
And pigmy warriors, mazed and harried then
As now in meshes of thy checkered strife—
Unshielded Pawns, trim Knights and frowning Rooks
Stolid yet quick, and Bishops smug, with looks
A-squint, and King with lame yet endless life.

Thou Battle Royal! Years unnumbered soil
Cards, draughts and dice with myrid grime-worn hands.
Thou, lov'd by dames and lords in all the lands
Of this broad world art still the world's best play;
Where, as in life, whilst others struggle, toil,
And die, the imperious Queen controls the day!

España.

"Que era, decidme, la nación que un dia
Reina del mundo proclamó el destino? . . .
Quintana—Oda á España.

WHERE now that Nation proud which Destiny
Once did proclaim this world's all conquering queen?
Where now that sceptre, that bright blazon seen
That mark'd her mistress over land and sea?
A lost emprise, a shattered galleon she,
Sails rent and hull agape that once have been
World-powerful; her rotting masts careen
With each dark surge of long-pent enmity.

On through sea's salty wastes the tempests spurn,
The waves rebuff her; lights no more there gleam
Nor vergies wave on her high carven beam.
Stilled is the sailor's jest, the skipper's song;
In swirling fogs of night she drives along
With Helmsman Death stark-frozen at the stern!....

Love's Fear.

VIRGIN art thou and pure, amid a throng
Of such sweet hallowed names as all men praise.
(Grown all too scant in these our latter days!)
To holy hours of old dost thou belong;
Saint Agnès then had heard thine even-song,
Nor left thee, darkling, in Earth's devious ways.
Thou'rt one with that sweet sisterhood which raise
To "untouched Dian," all clear streams along,
Their full-voiced anthem. Thou a Vestal art
At true-love's altar. Atala, and the Maid,
And Mary all are sisters of thy blood!
Thy very name is virgin! . . . I, afraid,
How shall I press my kisses on thy heart,
Or loose the girdle of thy maidenhood? . . .

Longings.

"... Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria. . ."

Inferno, V, 121.

FAR from the sea-girt City that I love,
My wandering ways by care attended lie;
Cold is the azure of this foreign sky,
And strange these clustered stars that burn above.
Out from this loveless land would I remove
To seek thy spring Pierian, never-dry,
Thou thrice-crowned City! Hear my fainting cry.
Let not my passionate longing fruitless prove!
Would I once more might see the dome of gold
Burning aloft, beneath my native sky!
The river, winding near my home of old,
And once again to breathe before I die,
The evening breeze, may it be granted me,
In that fair city by the distant sea! . . .

The Eighth Ode of the Fourth Book of Horace.

To C. Martius Censorinus.

"Donarem pateras grataque commodus. . ."

FREELY to my companions would I give
Beautiful bronzes, Censorinus, bowls
And tripods, once a guerdon to the souls
Of hardy Greeks; nor should'st thou bear away
The meanest of my gifts, could I but live
Possessed of arts like those Parrhasius plied,
Or Skopas, now depicting human clay
And now a god, in liquid colors one
In solid stone the other. But denied
To me are equal powers; need hast thou none
In mind or state for treasures like to these.
Thou dost delight in songs, and such are mine
To give, and fix a value to each song.
Not marbles carved with public elegies,
Whence to illustrious leaders still belong
In dreamless death their praises half divine,
Not the precipitate flights of Hannibal

Nor those retorted threats that wrought him shame,
Not impious Carthage and her flaming fall
More highly show, than the Calabrian Muse,
Glories of him who, having gained a name
From prostrate conquered Africa, returned.
Neither if writings should perchance refuse
To herald forth what thou so well hast earned
Wouldst thou have fitting praise. What were the son
Of Mars and Ilia, if in jealousy
Silence had drowned those lofty merits won
By Romulus? Through eloquence, through strength
And favor of all poets loved of fame,
Aeacus hallowed is, from Stygian floods,
To the fair Islands of the Blest at length.

The Muse forbids the worthy man to die;
She blesseth him with Heaven. Thus Hercules,
Untiring victor, finds a place on high
At Jove's desired feasts. Tyndareus' sons,
Clear-shining stars, thus from the deepest seas
Rescue the shattered ships. Thus Bacchus fair,
Twining his temples with fresh vine-leaves green,
To fruitful issue brings the votaries' prayer.

Ricordatevi Di Me !

(*Terza Rima.*)

IF ever thou shouldst cease to think of me
With love, and turn thy soul's sweet warmth to ice—
(Stop not my mouth with kisses ! Change may be,

As all do know who take for their device
A bleeding heart !)—If any change should seal
To me the gates of uttermost Paradise,

And I should darkling fare, with no repeal,
In company of them, that, love forsaken,
Before cold shrines and at dead altars kneel,

Remember this—I bade thy heart awaken ;
Here in this hand it lay a prisoner !
Thy first wild love-kiss from my lips was taken,

And with my breath thy first sighs mingled were !
Remember this—I loved thee well and long,
Thou haven to me, a time-worn wanderer !

Then, though my voice be drowned in that
clear song
Of thy new love, and I forgotten be
Or all-despisèd, think thou in my wrong

Some good there was, some truth akin with
thee,
Some light half-seen, since I could tune a soul
Virgin as thine to perfect harmony,
And crown thy brow with Love's pure
aureole !

The Tower.

I

THERE lies a City of Unnumbered Dead
Where paths entwine, where hills and valleys be,
And still, black pools; the cypress mystically
Shrouds those dark ways. There living souls may tread
With but slow steps and rare. With slow steps, led
By Love two lovers passed; they spake, and she
Cast down her mystic eyes lest he might see
In their vague depths the image of her dread.

A great round-tower of granite crowns that land.
Thither they came, and now her starry eyes
Were raised to his; that dread which wrought them ill
Behind them with the frozen dead lay chill.
Up the enchanted stairway hand in hand
They passed, and issued forth to see the skies.

II

And yet their sweetest moment did not seem
That dizzying issue into tenuous light,
Where the keen salt-sea wind that lashed their height
Drowned their love-quickened breath as in a stream
Of chill, on-rushing æther; not the gleam
Of multitudinous Ocean, nor the bright
Expanse of Earth could draw their dazzled sight
From the new glory of their passionate dream.

It was upon the tower's midmost stair
At one dim diamond-window; both beguiled
Paused in the gloom; she trembled like a child;
His hot mouth found her mouth, her gold-twined hair,
And in her milk-white breast her heart beat wild
Beneath one burning kiss he printed there.

Love's Prayer.

WHEN thy ripe lips in kisses mould to meet
Mine eager mouth—when thy full pulsing throat
Throbs with thy quickening life-breath—when the float
And tangle of thine ungirt hair, oh Sweet,
Entwines us, breast to breast, the perfumed heat
Of each wild sigh fans all my face aflame,
And beat to beat our passionate hearts the same
Responses cry, as we Love's creed repeat.

When in each other's arms, love-wearied, we
Both nested safe in silken cushions warm

At Winter-evenfall entrancèd lie,
Kissing but closer as we list the storm,
Then pray we, midst our sweet antiphony
But this—that love like ours may never die ! . . .

"Combien J'ai Douce Souvenance. . . !

(*After Chateaubriand*)

OH sweet, how sweet old memories be
Of one most lovely place, to me—
My birthplace! Sister, fair those days
And free!
Oh France, be thou my love, my praise
Always!

Our mother—hath thy memory flown?—
Beside our humble chimney-stone
Pressed us against her heart, whilst you,
Dear one,
And I her white hair kissed anew,
We two.

Sweet little sister, dost recall
The stream that bathed the castle-wall?
The old round-tower whence came alway
The call
Of bells to banish night away
At day?

Dost thou recall the lake—how still !—
Where swallows skimmed at their sweet will ?
The reeds, swayed by the gentle air
Until
The sun set on the waters there,
So fair ?

Oh, who will give me my Helène ?
My mountains, my great oak again ?
Their memory brings with all my days
Fresh pain ;
My land shall be my love, my praise
Always !

My Little Red Devil and I.

"The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman."

Twelfth Night.

MY little Red Devil upon my desk
With a smile sardonic stands.
He holds my pen with a patient air
In his crooked, outstretched hands;
The paint is worn from his hoof and horn
And scratched is his curving tail,
Yet he still holds on with a right good grace,
A knowing look on his crafty face,
And spirits that never fail.

So, what if his fingers are some of them gone,
And twisted the horns on his head?
His cheek still glows, and his aquiline nose
Is a genuine devilish red;
And his tail, beside, is a thing of pride,
For it swings in a glorious sweep,
With a graceful bend and a fork in the end
That would cause a sinner his ways to mend,
Or a saint, his vows to keep!

Though only a single eye has he
The world and the flesh to view,
(For the right is gone,) yet the other one
Has fire enough for two.
So his eyes ill-mated an air jocund
To his wrinkled features lend,
And to see his look you would almost think
That he was tipping a devilish wink
To his old, familiar friend.

Oh, he is a jolly good fellow, in truth,
With a wit that is ever new,
And a heart like which, in this world of ours,
There are only, I fear, too few.
And he doesn't complain when I come in late
Or keep him awake o' nights,
So I have respect for his comfort, too,
By giving the Devil his utmost due,
And the whole of his royal rights.

To everyone else but myself his smile
Is fixed as the solid stone;
He changes the curve of his parted lips
For me, and for me alone.
So when I'm in luck he wishes me joy
With his whole Satanic heart,
But when I've the blues, it seems he would say
"Brace up, for the luck will be better some
day!"
And my cares like the wind depart.

So my Devil and I are the best of friends
In a sort of a cynical way,
For he watches me out of his only eye
As I work at my desk each day,
And the idle verses I write in hope,
He quietly smiles to see,
For he knows full well that at first or last,
Like Biblical bread on the waters cast,
They will surely come back to me. . .

And at night, as I sit by the ruddy hearth,
With my pipe and my book, alone,
Or lazily muse by the embers red
When the light of the fire is gone,
I think of him sometimes, and hope in my heart
I never shall see the day
That sets me adrift from my little friend
And puts to our sociable life an end,
By taking my Devil away! . . .

The College Pump.

IN Summertide, beneath high-vaulted shade,
In Winter, frosted all with glistering rime,
In chanting Spring, or Autumn's sullen time
When sodden leaves their tawny beds have made—
Alike when spendthrift Sun his gold afar
Downthrows, or earth lies shrouded all in cold,
By evil men and good, by young, by old,
In every season blessed thy waters are.

Grandsires and children drink with solaced eyes.
Dazed revellers early come with thirsty shame
Beneath gray glimmering of the sober skies.
All day men pause; and some, at eventide,
Poets, have hallowed with their touch thy name,
And with their lips thy waters sanctified.

I Disputanti.

LA MIA RAGIONE sento disputare
Col Core sempre—"Dopo crudel Morte,"
L'una dice, " con la sua man si forte
Il lume della vita spegni, io andare
Nel Buio credo . . ." L'altro poi; "Amare
È non morir. Il mio alto Fattore
Non puo voler che questo dolce fiore
Del mio affetto muoia . . ." "Io parlare
Del 'Credo' tuo non so; ma non c'è vita
Futura non c'è Dio. La Cagione
È l'Caso, solamente . . ." "È l'Amore,
L'Amore, quella via giammai smarrita,
Perduta mai . . ." Sempre così col Core
Io sento disputar la mia Ragione . . .

"Quand Vous Serez Bien Vieille . . ." Ronsard.

THOU (being sometime old), by candle-light
Close crouched by the fire, spinning and mumbling o'er
The past, shalt croon my verses, marvelling more
That Ronsard sang thy praise, what time thy bright
First beauty was. Then, hearing thee recite
Such thing, thy drowsy maid, though weary-sore
And nodding off to sleep, shall wake before
My name and thine, with blessings infinite.

I under earth shall be, a soul in vain
Seeking its rest where myrtle shadows play;
Thou by the hearthstone cringe, outworn and blear,
My love regretting and thy cold disdain.
Live! an thou hear'st me! Wait no other day!
Gather life's roses ere thy night be near!

One Summer Night.

The Fens, June, 1897.

FAR in the west the crescent moon hung low,
A filmy haze about it faintly spread,
And one bright star, a point of silver light
Seem'd comrade to it. Whispering Zephyrus
Tender as love, stole through the list'ning leaves,
Making a pleasant murmur in the night,
And touched the glimmering waters with his breath.
The ripples came unnumbered to the shore,
Soft-murmuring through the sedge and fenny reeds
With that same whisp'ring voice that Pan once heard
What time he first made pipes to sound the praise
Of her whom he had lost. The water's breast
Was banded with a path of shimmering light
Broken by the ever-restless waves, which made
A thousand points of liquid brilliancy.

And in the beauty of still, hallowed night
Beside the plashing sandy shore, we met
In happiness. Each whispering of the wind,
Each tremulous leaf, and even the sleeping
flowers
Seem'd breathing "Love" in tender unison,
And the sphered star in Heaven sang that word.
Dost thou remember how from out the grass,
I plucked a gentle flow'ret by that shore,
—Anemone some call it, wind-flower some,
Sprung from the crimson of Adonis' blood
Where he was slain,—and how I softly said,
"O thou belovèd, beauty is a rose
Growing in Life's fair garden, by the spring
Of deathless Purity, and that clear dew
Which lies within its sweetness hid, is Love."
Dost thou recall? And so it chance, I pray
Though we be parted, now and evermore,
Think sometimes of that night, and fancy still
We see the summer landscape, glimmering,
Lit by the steady-burning lights of heaven,
We scent the sweetness of the warm young
night,
We hold the tender wind-flower, and still hear
The murmuring ripples on the sounding shore.

A Une Fleurette

FLEURETTE! Sur sa poitrine si blanche et belle
Combien sens-tu de joie! Quel insensé bon heur
Que de t'y prélasser doucement toute une heure!
Sur ses seins arrondis, là, serrée tout contre elle,
Tu respires son être. Une volupté telle
Que moi j'en sentirais, là, si près de son coeur,
Sur ces deux petits monts de neige, heureuse fleur
Tu ressens... Ta mort, même, ô fleurette, est un ciel!

Dieu! Que je suis las de tout ce monde de peine
Et de ses vanités et de ses maux! Toujours
Te veut mon âme inquiète. Donne-moi ô Reine
Du royaume désert de mon coeur, mes amours,
Comme à cette fleurette ta poitrine aimée
Pour y dormir toujours, à toute éternité!...

Blest Be the Day.

The XXXIXth Sonnet of Petrarch to his Lady Laura.

He blesseth all the divers causes and effects of his love toward her.

BLEST be the day, the season and the year
The hour and moment, and the countrie fair,
Ay, even that very spot and instant where
Those two sweet eyne did first to me appear
Which since have left me—yet that sorrow dear
Of Love still blessèd be, like asthe bow
And shafts wherewith sweet Love did work me woe
With wounds most deep in this my bosom here.

Blest be the many voices wherewithal
I on my Lady's well-belovèd name
Have called, and blest the sighs, the tears, the flame
Of my desire, and all my screeds designed
To praise her—yet most blest my thoughts I call,
So hers that none but she may entrance find...

"Mignonne Allons Voir Si La Rose...."

After Ronsard.

COME, sweet, away! Come see the rose,
Now that the day draws near its close,
See whether it be faded grown—
Whether at evening fall away
Those leaves that opened to the day,
Or dies their blush, so like thine own.

Thou seest, dear love, its beauties pass,
Its wasted petals fall, alas!,
In one short hour. It may not bide.
Unkind in truth is Mother Earth
Since dawn gives such a flower its birth
And Death draws nigh at eventide.

So, sweet my darling, hear my voice,
I bid thee, in thy youth, rejoice!
Before thy fragile petals close
Gather thy blossoms whilst thou may,
With time they fall and fade away
As droops at night the withered rose.

Religion.

FROM that crude savage who, on Libyan sands,
Graves his barbaric god, and kneels thereto;
From those mysterious, matriarchal bands,
Eating strange flesh their spirit to renew
With fabled ancestors; from Austral lands
To Hyperborean solitudes, each age
Hath sought to fend its head from God's dull rage
And stay the cosmic circling with clasped hands.

Yea, we no less! Doth man dare look away
Bravely as fits a man? With fear-sealed eyes,
Filling the spheres with vast, vague mysteries,
Man still must hearken some great angel's wing,
Still bow to man-made God, still seek to stay
With claspèd hands the cosmic circling . . .

The Great Woods Were Awakening.

"Les grands bois s'éveillaient; il faisait jour à peine. . . "
Pradel.

THE great woods were awakening. A new day
Was freshly born; enchanted birds among
The clear green foliage raised their matin song
To praise the morning-glow. Thought-sad I lay
Beneath a gnarlèd oak; despite that gay
Fresh springtide, all my soul was suffering.
I waited her, and lo! the rapid wing
Of fluttering footsteps brushed the dew away.

Drunken with pleasure in a long-locked kiss
Our breath enmingled. Tightening in my arms
That beautiful, supple form, her heart's alarms
I stifled on my heart. The thicket drew
Close over us, the sun grew dark, I wis,
Earth faded, Heaven opened to our view. . .

I-N-R-I.

WITH bleeding brows beneath a thorn-meshed crown,
With swollen hands fast bound in leathern thong,
I saw One stand amid a surging throng
That spat on Him and strove to drag Him down.
On His bowed back the ridg'd welts scarlet lay
Traced long with bloody dew. His haggard face
Was streaked with sweat and blood, as in that place
He silent stood and silent gazed away.
Once more that One I saw, still garlanded
With mocking thorns. Through either bleeding hand
And through both patient feet a mangling nail
Was driven deep. Some cursed, some laughed, cried "Hail,
God crucified! . . ." And some crouched low in dread
And wept, and thunderous darkness filled the land . . .

Fayre Robyn.*

FAYRE ROBYN he rad owre the brae,
Hys steede he was a wighty browne;
The countrie a' lay at hys back,
Hys eyen were to the toune.

Bauld Robyn owre the brae did ride,
Nor yet a llorde nor yerle was he,
But mae than ony nobleman
Hys fayreness was to see.

And Robyn rad adoun the brae,
And cam yth High Strete;
A gentil pace hys horse hadde
Whych was baith goode and meete.

The Shyreff's dauter sate yth wane
And luikt out o' the window round,
Therebye Robyn rad and sang,
A braw and pleasant sound.

*This North Country ballad probably dates from about 1525. It was found in a fragmentary condition in a copy of the 1684 edition of Abraham Cowley's Poetical Works, and is here for the first time completed and made public.

She luikt upon hys goodely forme
He luikt a' in hir deepe blue yee;
Robyn doft hys bonnet; a rose to hym
She dropit for replye.

Leeve may o meete me bye the yett,
And a' taegither we will flie.
I'll meete thee when the nyghte be com,
So ryde again soone bye.

She's met hym when the nyghte was com,
And a' taegither they hae fled,
Now gin the Shyreff com, most sure
They maun baith be dead.

The hae na gane a league, a league,
A league nor barely ane,
When Robyn saith now by my bloode
They're reasin a' the toon.

They hae na gane anither league,
A league nor barely twa,
When they do heare a not ffar off
Some bernes that them pursue.

The be com unto a great roke;
Ye faith it was baith deepe and wide.
The Shyreff's bernes byn sonygh
The maun plunge them in the tyde.

They've plunged them in the cauld water,
The spait was ful swift bye;
Now byr Ladye, quoth the may,
Methinks we baith maun dee.

They've plunged them into the cauld roke;
The hors they rade sank doun.
A' yth black water then
The baith were neere to droune.

He bare hir firme in hys left arme
And swam a' wi' his right:
When the cam to yearth againe
The bernes byn in sight.

The bernes rad the roke along
And saw Robyn's bonnet on the tide.
Now be the baith to bottom gane,
Ther may the bide!

The Shyreff turned him home again,
Turned back and went awaie,
But Robyn and His Ladye ffayre
Were wed the nextin daye.

Coeur de Femme.

I CANNOT think that woman love as we
Love them, with soul and body, breath and blood,
And spent soul tortured in the strangling flood
Of passion's tense oblivious agony;
I cannot think the kiss She gives to me
Thrills her white body as it pulses mine,
Or in Love's chalice of ambrosial wine
She drowns all things which were or are to be.

We please them with our smile, for they are vain
And Love a flatterer is; they joy to fling
A rose-entwinèd leash about their slave;
Purple and gold they take, and winnowed grain
Of gems from Hesperus' isle,—all men will bring;
But *Love*—lies bleeding by a woman's grave!

BALLADES & RONDEAUX

Ballade of the Sick.

CAN these be men, that lie so still, so white?
Whose hopeless eyes yearn things they cannot say?
Who scarce can part the daytime from the night
Save that the night drags heavier than the day?
Have these a listening God, to whom they pray?
God hears not such, nor cares, right well know I,
For nameless things I learn through long delay,
On this strait bed where I perforce must lie.

I learn of life-in-death; I learn the blight
Of seeing my soul and body slow decay,
Hemmed in with white-walled nothingness. The flight
Of vagrant flies, the sunlight's sluggish way
Of crawling on—yes, even the shadows gray
Help tease the laggard moments loathly by.
Since great are none, small things my pain allay
On this strait bed where I perforce must lie.

I learn to see, nor shrink from any sight.
That deathmask yonder—carrion mass of clay—
Hath but a bleeding scrap of lung, to fight
The ghastly death that knows nor truce nor stay.
The Polack, old through pains that tear and flay,
Will go next sennight—how these swart folk
die!
Last week they found one, waxen-cold for aye,
On this strait bed where I perforce must lie.

ENVOY

"This too will pass!" my comfort be alway.
Hell is forgot of them that chant on high;
Yet have I seen such things no man should say,
On this strait bed where I perforce must lie . . .

Three Rondeaux from Charles d'Orléans.

I.

LE TEMPS A LAISSIÉ SON MANTEAU.

YE TIME hath lefte his mantle fall
Of biting windes and cold and rain,
And well hath dight himself again
In sunlight shining cleare on all;

Creatures be none, nor birds, but call
One to another their own refrain:
Ye time hath lefte his mantle fall
Of biting windes and cold and rain.

Fountaines and brooks moste musical
Their fayrest dress to wear be fain;
With silvern drops and golde, amain,
Each newlie decks hymself withall;
Ye time hath lefte his mantle fall.

II.

DIEU! QU'IL LA FAIT BON REGARDER!

Ye Gods! How good on her to gaze,
  All-gracious, fayre and sweet of mien;
  Such virtues be in her y-seen
All men stand ready with their praise.

Who then could weary of her ways?
  Her beautie flowereth ever green;
  Ye Gods! How good on her to gaze,
All-gracious, fayre and sweet of mien.

This side or yon of Ocean's maze
  Nor dame nor damozel, I ween
  So wholly parfaict yet hath been—
A dream, to think on her always:
Ye Gods! How good on her to gaze!...

III.

LES FOURRIERS D'ESTE SONT VENUS.

Ye maides in waiting all be here
Of Summertide, to deck her hall,
To hang her arras, woven all
With golden flowers and verdure clear;

To stretch her carpet far and near
Of soft green moss o'er stone and wall;
Ye maides in waiting all be here
Of Summertide, to deck her hall.

Hearts that but late were cold and drear
Now (prais'd be God!), their joy recall;
Come, come away, with snow-wrapped pall!
Out on thee, Winter, old and blear!
Ye maides in waiting all be here . . .

The Song of the Poor.

"O Rois qui serez jugés à votre tour."
Banville.

O KINGS, who must yourselves be judged one day,
Think of the wretched poor that ever stand
On Famine's edge, and pity them! They pray
For you and love you; drudging till your land,
And, toiling, fill your coffers—they withstand
Your enemies; yet damned on earth they fare,
Woe infinite and endless pain they bear;
Not one there is but knows the keen distress
Of cold, of heat, and rain and ceaseless care,
For to the poor all things are bitterness.

Even as a beast of burden, scourged amain,
The wretched peasant lives his hopeless life.
Does he but pluck his grapes, or dare refrain
An hour from drudging toil, and choose a wife
To share the sorrow of his unequal strife,—
His lord, a savage bird of prey, draws nigh;

Relentless comes, and, saying "Here am I!"
Seizes what little he may chance possess.
Nothing avails the vassal's pleading cry,
For to the poor all things are bitterness.

Pity the wretched jester in your halls!
Think on the fisher when the black waves curl
Their frothing tongues, and crackling lightning falls
On his frail boat! Pity the blue-eyed girl,

Lowly and dreaming, as her young hands whirl
The droning wheel! Think of a mother's pain
And torment, as she weeps and seeks in vain,
Holding her fair dead child in blind distress,
To warm its cold heart back to life again.
O, to the poor all things are bitterness.

ENVOI.

Mercy for these thine own, oh Prince, I cry!
Peace to thy vassal 'neath his darkened sky,
Peace to the pale nun, praying passionless,
And to all such as lowly live and die—
For to the poor all things are bitterness.

Kyrielle.

NAY, not for me the toil and strife
Of 'Change, of war, of public life—
Than go with Fame, I'd rather stay
With books, and pipe and dear Edmée.

A little garden? . . . Well, perchance,
If weedless flowers, self-raising plants
Would grow therein, where I might stray
With books, and pipe and dear Edmée.

Horses and dogs? . . . Yes, I'd not mind
Were I but ever sure to find
An hour of peace, at close of day
With books, and pipe and dear Edmée.

Travel? . . . Of course! The Frank might stare,
The Russian rave, the Turk despair;
I none the less would them survey
With books, and pipe and dear Edmée.

But homeward-longing ever, I
Still for our low-built house would sign,
Where I might peaceful be for aye
With books, and pipe and dear Edmée.

Old books and many, pipe not new,
Edmée all mine, forever, too,
I'd love them all till I were grey,
But best and dearest, dear Edmée! . . .

Rondeau.

THY breast, dear Doris, ever be
All-hallowed, consecrate to me,
A rest where this my heart may go
Whatever tempests beat and blow;
A shelter that my soul may see
Though all the world speak grievously.
Warmed in its softness, dear, by thee,
My love shall sometime come to know
Thy breast.

And sometime, too, so reverently
Thou couldst not, Sweet, refuse my plea.
I'll kiss the dimple that I know
Betwixt those little hills of snow
Waits, till my lips press passionately
Thy breast! . . .

When I First Saw Edmée

(Villanelle.)

WHEN I first saw Edmée
She was clad all in blue.
A cold colour, you say?

Yes, I thought so, that day,
And my hopes were but few
When I first saw Edmée;

Now, of azure array
I've quite altered my view—
A cold colour, you say?

Is the sky cold in May?
How little I knew,
When I first saw Edmée.

All the sweetness there lay
In the shade that means "true!"...
A cold colour, you say?

Ah, my heart's quite away.
The sad moment I rue
When I first saw Edmée.
A *cold* colour, you say?...

My Old Coat.

"Sois-moi fidèle, ô pauvre habit que j'aime."
Béranger.

BE ever true to me, thou well-loved coat,
For we are growing old together now,
These ten long years I've brushed thee every day
Myself; great Socrates the Sage, I trow
Had not done better! And if remorseless Fate
Gnaw with sharp tooth that poor, thin cloth of thine,
Resist, say I, with calm philosophy,
Let us not part, thou dear old friend of mine!

How I recall—(for even now I'm bless'd
With a good memory!), that glad day of days
When first I wore thee! It was at my feast;
My friends to crown my glory, sang thy praise.
Thy poverty and age that honor me
Have not yet made their early love decline—
They're ready still to feast us once again.
Let us not part, thou dear old friend of mine!

Have I perfumed thee with those floods of
musk,
Which the vain fop exhales before his glass?
Have I exposed thee, waiting audience,
To scorn and laughter of the great who pass?
Just for a paltry ribbon, all fair wide France
Was rent apart, but simply I combine
A few sweet wild-flowers for thine ornament.
Let us not part, thou dear old friend of mine! . . .

Fear nevermore those days of struggling vain,
When the same lowly destiny was ours;
Those days of pleasure intermix'd with pain,
Of sunny sky o'ercast by April showers.
Soon comes the night, for evening shadows fall,
And soon forever must I my coat resign.
Wait yet a little, together we'll end it all,
And never part, thou dear old friend of mine! . . .

A Pantoum.

HERE I must lie on my bed,
Longing for health again.
Crazy thoughts whirl in my head,
Mix with that endless pain.

Longing for health again—
Dreams of walking once more
Mix with that endless pain.
Lying in bed is a bore!

Dreams of walking once more,
After these months of repression,
Lying in bed is a bore
Past any means of expression!

After these months of repression,
To wander, and study, and revel . . .
Past any means of expression,
Pain, you're a villainous devil!

To wander, and study, and revel,
To eat, drink, and live like a man . . .
(Pain, you're a villainous devil! . . .)
With never a doctor to ban—

To eat, drink, and live like a man,
To wander in meadow and wood,
With never a doctor to ban
Those things that I know to be good . . .

To wander in meadow and wood,
With Someone, enjoying October,
Those things that I know to be good,
The sky, be it sunny or sober.

With Someone, enjoying October,
To see the gay trees and the hills,
The sky, be it sunny or sober,
With a curse on all doctors and pills . . .

To see the gay trees and the hills,
Hope is quick faded and fled.
With a curse on all doctors and pills,
Here I must lie on my bed ! . . .

When Doris Deigns.

WHEN Doris deigns to gaze on me
All happy thoughts be mine;
Her eyes are two twin stars, I wis,
Bright in my soul they shine;
No earth-born flower one half so fair
As she, no joy can aught compare
With my sweet fire of love, perdie,
When Doris deigns to gaze on me!

When Doris deigns to smile on me
The whole world brighter grows;
A clearer azure takes the sky,
A deeper blush the rose;
The circling lark upon the wing
A sweeter, purer song doth sing,
And just a bit of Heav'n I see,
When Doris deigns to smile on me!

THE YEAR

Spring.

MAY EVENING.

SILENCE and peace. The warm, love-bringing Night
From the pure zenith soft and slow descending
Lulls the sweet air to rest, with the day's ending,
Save where the dark bat wheels his fickle flight.
Deep glows the rosy-golden West, still bright,
Beyond the plumy toss of elms down-bending,
Whilst on the close-cut lawns, blurring and bending,
Tall chapel-windows cast their ruddy light.

Now the clear blue of the mid dome of heaven
Darkens, immeasurably deep and still.
That one full star which ushers in the even
Burns in rapt glory o'er the steadfast spire;
And the Night-angel strews at his sweet will
The silvern star-dust of the heavenly choir.

Summer.

AUGUST RAIN.

DEAD is the day, and through the list'ning leaves
The wind-dirge sighs. Sad at my dim-lit pane
I darkling sit to hear the pattering rain
And pebbly drip that plashes from the eaves.
Far in the misty fields loll sodden sheaves,
Whilst every wheel-mark in the rutty lane
Leads down its trickling rivulet to drain
Marsh-meadows where the knotted willow grieves.

Gray afternoon to dusk hath given place,
And dusk to silent darkness falls again.
Listless, to see the sad earth veil her face,
I watch the miry fields, the swollen rills,
And, farther, through my glimmering window-pane,
The rain-swept valley and the fading hills . . .

Autumn.

NOVEMBER IN CAMBRIDGE.

EVEN in her mourning is the College fair,
With burial robes of scarlet leaves and gold
That flicker down in misty morning cold
Or fall reluctant through gray evening air.
The Gothic elms rise desolately bare;
A clinging flame the twisted ivy crawls
Its blood-red course athwart the time-worn walls
And spreads its crimson arras everywhere.

High noon brings some wan ghost of summer, still;
Fresh stand the rose-trees yet, the lawns show green
With leaves inlaid, and still the pigeons fly
Round sun-warm gables where they court and preen;
But evenfall comes shuddering down, a-chill,
And bare black branches fret the leaden sky.

Winter.

HAMPTON HOLIDAYS.

LAST comes December with his ruffian wind
Whirled from the maelstrom of the polar sea
To sweep our mighty hill in mockery
Of such enshrouding snows as would be kind
And wrap their frozen mother. Stiffly lined
Through thin and crackling ice the leaves lie stark
As hoar Caïna's ice-locked souls, and dark
In the dark air the branches toss and grind.

Then dawns another day when winds are still;
From our frost-flashing village on the hill
We greet the laggard sun, and far below
All down the valley see the silver spread,
Save where the dim fir-forest's pungent bed
Lies thatched by tufted pine-plumes bright with snow.

MORS OMNIUM VICTOR

Gunga Din in Hell.

"An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!"
Kipling.

GREEN crawling slime, that bubbles clotted blood;
White wraiths of fetid steam that rise and curl,
And blood-red mist, convolving in a swirl
Of lurid heat, o'er that putrescent flood;
And under all, a seething, rotting mud—
Torn souls that once were men—flayed, bleeding souls,
Souls drenched with gore from gangrenous bullet-holes,
Green, sightless eyes—and blood, and blood, and blood!

Lo! Gunga Din! He cometh smeared with gore
That dribbles from cleft forehead to the skin
Of putrid drink, one black foot on Hell's shore,
One in the slime. A flayed hand toward him grasps,
And one blind, shattered head that bleeds for sin
Bloats forth its purple tongue in strangling gasps.

Cui Bono?

NAY, vex me not with dead theologies,
With creeds outworn and vain polemic strife;
To solve the riddles of some future life
Why chill my soul with stark philosophies?
What then to me is Aristoteles,
Plato, or he who had the shrewish wife
(Small blame to her!), or Pyrrho's doubtings, rife
With contradiction's maziest subtleties?

Only one thing is sure—they all are dead;
Sere theologians, wranglers of the schools,
Philosophers and creedsmen have surcease
From war, their dust no better than the fools'
Wherewith 'tis mingled undistinguishèd.

So, vex me not, but go your ways in peace ...

The Bride-Bed.

SHE died and by her bed I sat all night.
I had no tears; it was o'er soon to weep
In those first hours; my heart was cleft too deep
For pain to harbor there. A waning light
From the old moon englorified her bright
And unadornèd hair, a heavy braid
Across her breast. I watched her, unafraid
To warm that leaden hand so waxen-white.

This was her Bride-bed—Death her lover was
As she had promised I sometime should be.
She lay entwinèd in his arms, and I
Kept watch, and a great cold came over us . . .

At last the untroubled stars that gazed on me
Waxed pale and faded in the morning sky.

Dead Loves.

LONG summer nights with moon that yearneth down
On endless passion, through uncounted years,
On flames of love more hot than all those tears
Of ardent pain it worketh aye can drown;
Long summer nights in vast Assyria's town,
At white-walled Athens, in imperial Rome,
Or midst dim Northern forests, by the foam
Of seas unsailed ere Arthur won renown.

Moonlight and leafshade—nights full sweet and long:
"O Love, my love, how white thy breast! Thy kiss
Upon my mouth, how mad!"—"And thou, how strong
Thine arms! I fear thy passion!"—"Tell me, must
Not Time and Death bow down to love like this? . . ."

Now, even their graves are crumbled into dust.

Death, the Friend.

FULL long these dreary weeks of dule I spend
On this my narrow bed of bitter pain.
Alike to me are sunshine, cloud or rain,
The day's beginning or its sombre end;
Even sleep itself doth little comfort lend,
For in vast dreams the torment comes again
Vague and distorted by my feverish brain
Until I wake and long for Death the Friend.

Death! I do fear that empty, breathless Night
Thou bringest, not the sweat and agony,
The struggling breath, the terror or the sight
Of Earth and all my being leaving me;
For couldst thou promise an awakening—
Then, Death, enfold me with thy shadowy wing! ...

La Jeune Fille.

" Elle était bien belle, le matin,
sans atours !

HOW fair, at dawn, how simply did she go,
Watching her new-born garden flowrets thrive,
Spying her bees in their ambrosial hive,
Ling'ring beside each hedge and hawthorn row !

How fair at eventide lead on the maze
Of the mad dance, whilst in her massy hair
Sapphires and roses woven crowned more fair
That face illumined by the torches' blaze !

How fair was she beneath her pure soft veil,
Outfloating wide upon the listening night ;
Silent we stood and far, to watch that sight,
Happy to glimpse her in the starlight pale.

How fair was she ! Each day some sweetness gave,
Some vague dear hope, pure thoughts and free from care.
Love, love was all she lacked, to grow more fair.
Peace ! . . . Through the fields they bear her to the grave ! . . .

Lucie.

Mes chers amis, quand je mourrai,
Plantez un saule au cimetière.
J'aime son feuillage éploré,
La paleur m'en est douce et chère,
Et son ombre sera légère
A la terre où je dormirai.

Alfred de Musset

DEAR friends belovèd, when I die,
Plant near my grave a willow-tree.
I love its pale, down-drooping leaves,
Its grace is sweet and dear to me,
And light its tender shade will be
Upon the green earth where I lie...

One night we were alone and by her side
I sat, she drooped her head and as a-dream
Over the spinet let her fair hand glide.
So soft the murmur was it scarce could seem
More than a zephyr whispering in the reeds,
Soft moving lest the birds, warm-nested there
Should hear and wake. The soft, voluptuous air
Of that sweet summer night breathed forth to us
From flowery chalices beside the glimmering stream.

Far in the silent grove the chestnut-trees
And ancient oaks swayed their sad branches
slow;
We sat and, listening to the amorous breeze,
Through the half-opened casement let the low
Sweet breath of Spring float in. The winds
were still,
The plain deserted. All alone we were
And very young... Lucie was blonde and pale
And pensive. As I musing gazed on her
No sweeter eyes than hers e'er pierced the deep
Of purest heaven, or mirrored back its blue.
I with her beauty drunken was; in all
The world I loved but her, and yet so true
So pure she was I loved her as one loves
A sister, in all innocence. We two
Sat silent and alone; my hand touched hers,
I watched the dreams upon her face and knew
In my own soul how strong to heal distress
Are those twin signs of peace and happiness,
Youth in the heart, youth mirrored on the brow.
The moon, uprising in the cloudless skies,
With silver fret-work flooded her, and now
Her smile became an angel's smile; she sang,
Seeing her image shining in mine eyes.

. . . . . .

Daughter of sorrow, Harmony! Harmony!
Sweet speech for love by Nature set apart!
To us thou camest from Italy—to her
From Heaven. Sweet language of the heart,
In thee alone that maiden, Thought, afraid
And hurt by even a passing cloud, may speak,
Yet keep her modest veil, and sheltered be.
Who knows the mysteries that a child may hear
And utter in thy sighs divine, like thee
Born of the air he breathes, sweet as his voice,
And sad as his sad heart? A glance, a tear
Is seen, yet all the rest is mystery
Unknown to the careless world, like that of
waves,
Of night, or of the unfathomed wilderness...
We were alone and sad; I looked on her.
The dying echo of her song seemed still
To vibrate in our souls. All passionless
Drooping upon my heart, she leaned her head.
The cry of Desdemona didst thou hear
In thee, dear girl? I know not—only this,
That thou didst weep, and on thine all-adored
Sweet mouth in sadness let me press mine own;
Thy sorrow was it that received my kiss...

So kissed I thee, all cold and colourless;
So, two short months being sped, wert thou
Laid in the grave; so didst thou fade in death
Oh my chaste flower! And thy dying was
A smile as sweet as thy fair life had been.
God took thee pure as when He gave thee breath.

. . . . . .

Sweet mystery of the home of innocence,
Songs, dreams of love, laughter and childish
words,
And thou, all-conquering charm, unknown and
mild,

Yet strong to make even Faustus pause before
The sill of Marguerite at thy command,
Where are you all? Peace to thy soul, oh child!
Profoundest peace be to thy memories!
Farewell! On summer nights thy fair white
hand
Will rest no more upon the ivory keys...

. . . . . .

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I love its pale, down-drooping leaves,
Its grace is sweet and dear to me,
And light its tender shade will be.
Upon the green earth where I lie. . . .

L. of C.

Luctus in Morte Passeris.

"Lugete, O Veneres Cupidenesque, et quantum est hominum venustiorum."

C. Valerius Catullus.

I BID you all, ye Loves and Cupids, mourn,
With what of pitying kindness men may know.

The sparrow of my little maid forlorn
Ay, even my sweetheart's sparrow, cherished so,
(Loved like her very eyes, ah heavy woe!)
Is dead. Full sweet was he, and knew her well
As she her mother knew, nor long would stray
From her fair breast, save here to hop, or there;
His pretty pipings were for her alway.
Yet now he wings the shadowy gloom of Hell,
Whence none return to breathe Earth's pleasant air.

But curses on thee, dark and evil shade
So to engulf all things that lovely be!
Thou'st robbed her sparrow from my little maid;
(Alas the crime, the sparrow stark and dead!)
And now with swollen eyes, because of thee
She weeps, alack, nor will be comforted.

Death in December.

I.

WITH roses will I strew our bed
Where all thine own thou madest me;
With rose-weaths I entwine thy head
So dear, so dead.

This is Love's inmost place, where we
Learned and with madness learned again
And knew Love's passionate agony
That wasteth me.

Now is thy room and mine Death's room,
And this our bed (O burning kiss!)
Is made Death's icy bed. The tomb
Shrouds it in gloom.

. . . . . .

II.

The snow beats up about the pane
Where once we watched the August night,
And wild mad winds drive on amain
Across the plain.

. . . . , .

III.

Alone! . . . Alone? Beneath my heart
Fainting I feel our new life beat,
Where our lives, joined, though dead thou art,
Share each a part.

On thy clear temples, bleeding-red
The rose-wreaths twine, the flowers die.
With roses do I deck our bed
Where thou liest dead.

The Royal Council.

(To the Peruvian Mummies in the Peabody Museum at Cambridge.)

BOWED be three time-gnawed heads in thoughts profound
On crackling breast, on fleshless hands, on knees,
Sunk in the depths of endless reveries
Whilst foolish sun and fretful earth spin round.
By night they counsel, argue, plan, expound
And hold high court as once by tropic seas;
By day they rightly take their royal ease
As fitteth those whom Death no more can hound.

Sage King, and ye two Councillors of State,
We look on you with ignorant, living eyes.
Ye fear no death who be already dead—
Time pricks you not, nor haste. Ye sit and wait,
Each thoughtful, passionless and very wise,
With shrivelled bones and parchment-covered head . . .

Carmen Mortis.

THIS is the Song of Death,
This is the burial-note
After the end of breath
Gasped by corrupted throat;
After the passing-breath
Heard from the grave remote;
This is the Song of Death,
This is the burial-note...

O, sweet it is to be long since dead
And buried in earth so cold;
To feel on the roof of thy narrow bed
The weight of the sodden mould,
To lie in the dark of an endless night
And the lees of an oozing slime—
I know these joys, for I have been dead
And buried, a long, long time...

My lips they are drawn in a ghastly smile
But through them there goes no breath;
And my eyes they are dead and sunk in my head,
Yet forever they stare, in death,
For I look at the rotting burial-boards
Close sagging above my head;

Yea, I have been buried a long, long time,
For I have been long since dead . . .
My corpse is a-cold, for the chilling mould
Is about me on every side.
I lie like a stone, with my Terror, alone,
For here in the grave I died . . .
Yea, I screamed full loud in my ghastly shroud
When I woke in the noisome gloom,
And the sweat of my agony froze like ice
As I fought with my fearful doom . . .

But now—I am dead, though my lips still laugh
In the motionless black of night,
Though my bleared eyes stare in the grave, for they see

Not even the glow-worm's light;
Yet still I can see that to buried be
Is a sweet and a happy thing,
For I sing my Song in the House of Death,
And this is the Song I sing:

Welcome - slimy - worm - with - sightless - head -
Blindly - burrowing - in - the - fearful - night -
Happy - shouldst - thou - be - for - lack - of - sight -

Since - thou - canst - not - see - that - I - am - dead -

When - thou - comest - from - thy - secret - place -

Eating - through - the - earth - with - silent - care -

Boldly - come - I - bid - and - boldly - dare -

Down - to - drop - upon - my - leaden - face -

Drag - thy - sluggish - slime - across - my - eyes -

They - will - never - close - to - touch - of - thine -

Coil - within - these - hideous - lips - of - mine -

Where - a - Maid - breathed - long - ago - her - sighs -

Welcome - slimy - worm - with - creeping - head -

Meet - it - is - that - thou - my - friend - shouldst - be -

Happy - art - thou - since - thou - canst - not - see -

I - am - buried - deep - and - I - am - dead

Then these be the words of the Song of Death
That I sing in my prison-cell.
It charms the worms with the hooded heads,
And the worms I love full well.
It charms the worms, though my singing is
But a mouthing, mumbling groan,
For I have no breath in this House of Death
And I mutter with lips alone . . .

So, my tale it is told of the dread and cold
In the depths of this livid gloom ;
And I motionless lie, as I strive to die,
As I rot in my narrow room,
For I am not dead whilst my fearful head
The foul, fat worms forsake ;
But, when that is gone, then my dream it is done,
And I sleep at last, never to wake . . .

. . .

This is the Song of Death,
This is the burial-note
After the end of breath
Gasped by corrupted throat;
After the passing breath
Heard from the grave remote;
This is the burial-note,
This is the Song of Death . . .

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